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It covers (1) U.S. Federal government documents, especially those from executive branch departments and those from the Congressional branch; (2) policy briefs from major private think tanks; (3) major reports from professional associations; and (4) articles.

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Reports

Item#1

Arab Threat Perceptions and the Future of the U.S. Military Presence in the Middle East. Strategic Studies Institute. W. Andrew Terrill. October 22, 2015.

The threat perceptions of many Arab states aligned with the United States have changed significantly as a result of the dramatic events occurring in the region and globally since 2011. The report analyzes these new Arab threat perceptions and considers how the United States can work with its allies to strengthen both U.S. and allied goals in the region.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1297> [HTML format with a link to the PDF file].

Item#2

In Syrian War, Peace, Politics and Possibilities Are a Local Affair. U.S. Institute of Peace. Osama Gharizi. October 2015.

While the mass bloodshed of Syria's civil war so far has spared many Kurdish and Arab farming villages in Syria's far northeast, the war has exacerbated communal tensions there. So recently, 14 religious, tribal and civic leaders from one locality traveled to neighboring Iraq for talks to ease those tensions and prevent an outbreak of violence.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/10/14/in-syrian-war-peace-politics-and-possibilities-are-local-affair> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#3

Deep Divisions in Turkey as Election Nears: But Turks Share Negative Views of Foreign Powers. Pew Research Center. Jacob Poushter. October 15, 2015.

As a result of a political deadlock stemming from the June 2015 parliamentary elections in Turkey, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has called a snap election, set for November 1, 2015. Even before the current political stalemate, Turks were split on whether the democratic system in their country was working, and positive views of Erdogan were at their lowest point since 2012. However, a majority of Turks still prefer a democratic form of government rather than a leader with a strong hand to guide their country, according to the report.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://www.pewglobal.org/files/2015/10/Pew-Research-Center-Turkey-Report-FINAL-October-15-2015.pdf> [PDF format, 19 pages, 352.12 KB].

Item#4

Russian Compliance with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty: Background and Issues for Congress. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Amy F. Woolf. October 13, 2015.

The United States and Soviet Union signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in December 1987. Negotiations on this treaty were the result of a “dual-track” decision taken by NATO in 1979. The United States has raised its concerns about Russian compliance with the INF Treaty in a number of meetings during the past few years. These meetings have made little progress because Russia continues to deny that it has violated the treaty. The United States could pursue a number of options that might move the diplomatic process forward and possibly lead to a resolution of the issue.

<http://www.fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/nuke/R43832.pdf> [PDF format, 35 pages, 726.4 KB].

Item#5

Nepal’s Constitutional Crisis Involves Its Giant Neighbors. YaleGlobal. Harsh V. Pant. October 15, 2015.

Nepal is undergoing a transition, putting forth a constitution after a decade of conflict, political upheavals and protests along with a devastating earthquake from which it has yet to recover. But the constitution, described as discriminating against ethnic groups that account for almost half the population, could pose more challenges. The country of 28 million people is nestled between two great rivals. India is viewed as too involved in Nepal’s domestic politics, while China is exploiting Nepalese insecurities to serve its own interests, explains Harsh V. Pant. China has overtaken India as Nepal’s biggest foreign investor, and in 2014 the country ranked among the world’s top 35 foreign aid recipients. Pant concludes that marginalization, resentment and interference from larger neighbors could contribute to more destabilization and conflict.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/nepals-constitutional-crisis-involves-its-giant-neighbors> [HTML format, various paging].

Item#6

Deepening India-U.S. Cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific Regions. Center for Strategic & International Studies. Richard M. Rossow et al. October 21, 2015.

The paper summarizes the discussion and recommendations arising out of a workshop organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) in Honolulu, Hawaii, on June 27, 2015. The workshop included officials from the governments of India and the United States, though the views are not considered “official policy” by either government. The paper presents both governments with a possible path forward to strengthen cooperation on humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR).

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://csis.org/files/publication/151021_Rossow_DeepeningUSIndiaCooperation_Web.pdf [PDF format, 10 pages, 233.52 KB].

Item#7

Pacific Trade Deal Needs to Harmonize With Sustainable Development Goals. YaleGlobal. Shuaihua Wallace Cheng. October 22, 2015.

Developed and poorer developing nations often struggle to agree on global initiatives. But two major deals have been announced: The 193 members of the United Nations approved global action on 17 Sustainable Development Goals to reduce poverty, and 12 nations concluded negotiations on the Transpacific Trade Partnership, the largest regional trade agreement in history. The trade agreement supports the sustainable development goals in some ways and undermines them in others, explains Cheng. The world needs global leadership on trade that promotes sustainability and the United States could be in the position to provide such leadership, notes Cheng. The next chance is December's World Trade Organization ministerial meeting at which the United States could encourage trade practices that promote freedom and fairness while reducing poverty.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/pacific-trade-deal-needs-harmonize-sustainable-development-goals>
[HTML format, various paging].

Item#8

Religion and Science. Pew Research Center. Cary Funk and Becka A. Alper. October 22, 2015.

Are science and religion at odds with each other? A majority of the public says science and religion often conflict, with nearly six-in-ten adults (59%) expressing this view in the survey. The share of the public saying science and religion are often in conflict is up modestly from 55% in 2009, when the survey on religion and science was conducted last by Pew Research Center.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.pewinternet.org/files/2015/10/PI_2015-10-22_religion-and-science_FINAL.pdf [PDF format, 64 pages, 1.12 MB].

Item#9

Three-in-Ten U.S. Jobs Are Held by the Self-Employed and the Workers They Hire. Pew Research Center. October 22, 2015.

Self-employed Americans and the workers they hired accounted for 44 million jobs in 2014, or 30% of the national workforce, according to the analysis of data the U.S. Census Bureau recently made publicly available for the first time. The self-employed, 14.6 million in all, represented 10% of the nation's 146 million workers, and they in turn provided jobs for 29.4 million other workers.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2015/10/2015-10-22_self-employed_final.pdf [PDF format, 33 pages, 631.17 KB].

Item#10

The Rise of iWar: Identity, Information, and the Individualization of Modern Warfare. Strategic Studies Institute. Glenn J. Voelz. October 16, 2015.

During a decade of global counterterrorism operations and two extended counterinsurgency campaigns, the United States was confronted with a new kind of adversary. Without uniforms, flags, and formations, the task of identifying and targeting these combatants represented an unprecedented operational challenge for which Cold War era doctrinal methods were largely unsuited.

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/files/1292-summary.pdf> Executive Summary [PDF format, 2 pages, 551.8 KB].

<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=1292> Full Text [HTML format with a link to the PDF file].

Item#11

The Internet of Things: Frequently Asked Questions. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Eric A. Fischer. October 13, 2015.

“Internet of Things” (IoT) refers to networks of objects that communicate with other objects and with computers through the Internet. “Things” may include virtually any object for which remote communication, data collection, or control might be useful, such as vehicles, appliances, medical devices, electric grids, transportation infrastructure, manufacturing equipment, or building systems. In other words, the IoT potentially includes huge numbers and kinds of interconnected objects. It is often considered the next major stage in the evolution of cyberspace. Some observers believe it might even lead to a world where cyberspace and human space would seem to effectively merge, with unpredictable but potentially momentous societal and cultural impacts.

<http://www.fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/misc/R44227.pdf> [PDF format, 27 pages, 734.5 KB].

Item#12

Bitcoin: Questions, Answers, and Analysis of Legal Issues. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Edward V. Murphy et al. October 13, 2015.

Bitcoin first appeared in January 2009, the creation of a computer programmer using the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto. His invention is an open-source, peer-to-peer digital currency. The Bitcoin system is private, with no traditional financial institutions involved in transactions. Congress is interested in Bitcoin because of concerns about its use in illegal money transfers, concerns about its effect on the ability of the Federal Reserve to meet its objectives (of stable prices, maximum employment, and financial stability), and concerns about the protection of consumers and investors who might use Bitcoin.

<http://www.fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/misc/R43339.pdf> [PDF format, 36 pages, 789.3 KB].

Item#13

Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA): Background and Funding. Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress. Adrienne L. Fernandes-Alcantara. October 14, 2015.

Family violence broadly refers to acts of physical and sexual violence and emotional abuse perpetrated by individuals against family members. The federal government has responded to various forms of

family violence, including violence involving spouses and other intimate partners, children, and the elderly. The focus of this report is on the federal response to domestic violence under the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). “Domestic violence” is used in the report to describe violence among intimate partners, including those involved in dating relationships.

<http://www.fas.org:8080/sgp/crs/misc/R42838.pdf> [PDF format, 44 pages, 1.14 MB].

Item#14

Asking What the People Want: Using Mobile Phone Surveys to Identify Citizen Priorities. Center for Global Development. Benjamin Leo and Robert Morello. October 19, 2015.

Using an experimental design, the authors assess the feasibility of interactive voice recognition (IVR) surveys for gauging citizens’ development priorities. The project focuses on four low-income countries: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. We find that mobile phone-based approaches may be an effective tool for gathering information about citizen priorities.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

http://www.cgdev.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Working-Paper-418-Leo_Morello-What-the-People-Want_0.pdf [PDF format, 42 pages, 719.18 KB].

Item#15

Live Longer, Consume Less: Recipe for Slow Growth. YaleGlobal. Joergen Oerstroem Moeller. October 20, 2015.

Global growth no longer keeps the pace of just a decade ago. Oerstroem Moeller points to behaviors that contribute to reduced consumption: Life expectancy has risen, but ages for collecting pensions have remained steady at around age 60, thus stretching out the retirement stage of life. Fearing poverty, combined with increased uncertainty over government regulations and social welfare programs, consumers save more. Governments and corporations have taken on more debt; consumers recognize that tax bills and higher prices are inevitable. The behaviors are contributing to a trend of reduced growth. “Efforts from policymakers to reverse that trend will only further unbalance national economies and aggravate deficits and future burdens,” Moeller warns. He urges governments and individuals to respond with policies adjusting to lower growth and emphasizing qualitative growth including education, health and activities that promote well-being and happiness.

[Note: contains copyrighted material].

<http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/retire-early-live-longer-consume-less-recipe-slow-growth> [HTML format, various paging].

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